

## **Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 50**

### **RESOLUTION CHAPTER 132**

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 50—Relative to the 50th anniversary of the United States Air Force.

[Filed with Secretary of State September 23, 1997.]

#### **LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST**

SCR 50, Johannessen. 50th anniversary of the United States Air Force.

This measure would commemorate the 50th anniversary of the United States Air Force since its inception as an independent arm of the United States Armed Forces on September 18, 1947. The measure would recognize the Air Force's historical antecedents and its many achievements in the two World Wars, between the wars, the Korean War, Vietnam, and the Space Program, including, among other things, the Air Force's pioneering achievements in aeromedical research, the development of the Strategic Air Command (SAC), and the United States Air Force's intercontinental ballistic missile program.

WHEREAS, John La Mountain and Thaddeus S. C. Lowe were the first successful civilian balloonists employed by the Union Army of the United States to observe troop movements of the Confederate forces in 1861 as the Balloon Corps of the Army of the Potomac; and

WHEREAS, Brig. Gen. Adolphus W. Greenley, Chief Signal Officer of the United States Army from 1887 to 1906, established a balloon section in the Signal Corps, which sent its one balloon to Cuba after the outbreak of the Spanish-American War in 1898, to observe the Spanish troops and direct artillery fire in the Battle of San Juan Hill; and

WHEREAS, On August 1, 1907, the Signal Corps established an Aeronautical Division to take "charge of all matters pertaining to military ballooning, air machines, and all kindred subjects," giving birth to the Army Air Arm and opening the way to the acquisition of the service's first airplane, a Wright flyer; and

WHEREAS, On September 17, 1908, in a demonstration flight for the Army, with Orville Wright at the controls of his airplane, Lt. Thomas E. Selfridge, an aviation enthusiast, who had been associated with Alexander Graham Bell in aeronautical experiments, and who only a few months before, in May 1908, had become the first U.S. Army officer to make a solo flight in a powered flying machine, the "White Wing," developed by Bell and his associates, was tragically killed as a passenger in the same flight; and

WHEREAS, The pilots of the 94th Pursuit Squadron, the famous “Hat-in-the-Ring” squadron, became the first American-trained unit to see combat in World War I and, later commanded by Eddie Rickenbacker, America’s top ace, as part of the American Expeditionary Force (AEF), it included Maj. Raoul Lufbery, Lt. Douglas Campbell, and Lt. Frank Luke, Jr., who was killed in action, and like Rickenbacker was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor, and the unit became America’s “First Team,” first as a member of the 1st Pursuit Group, and then the 1st Fighter Group, and finally the 1st Tactical Fighter Wing, which from its beginnings in France in May 1918 to the modern wing stationed at Langley Air Force Base, the “First Team” has been in the forefront in the development and testing of new fighter tactics, new operational doctrines, and new equipment; and

WHEREAS, Between the World Wars, the pilots of the air corps made the first round-the-world flight on April 4, 1924, in 175 days, in four specially built Douglas World Cruiser airplanes covering 26,000 miles from Seattle, Washington, only two of which returned to Seattle on September 28, 1924, demonstrated the first use of aerial refueling in 1923, setting new endurance records in 1929, and in 1934 in a flight of B-10 Martin bombers to Alaska under the command of Lt. Col. Henry (Hap) H. Arnold, the future commanding general of the U.S. Army Air Forces during World War II, successfully proved the value of resupplying outlying possessions by air; and

WHEREAS, The United States Army Air Corps was organized on July 2, 1926, the United States Army Air Forces established on June 20, 1941, and the United States Army reorganized on December 9, 1942, into three autonomous forces, including the Army Air Forces, the predecessor to today’s United States Air Force; and

WHEREAS, The Army Air Forces through the 8th Air Force in England and the 15th Air Force based in Italy proved the value of daylight strategic bombing as a means of destroying an enemy’s ability to wage war, and with the availability of long-range fighter support reduced our casualties and increased the losses of the enemy, thereby shortening the war; and

WHEREAS, The Women’s Auxiliary Ferrying Squadron (WAFS), later redesignated as the Women’s Air Force Service Pilots (WASPS) contributed greatly to the World War II effort by ferrying aircraft, personnel, and testing top-secret weapons and airplanes to ensure their safety for use by flight instructors and students, and without acknowledgment of military service or honors until 1979, 38 died in the line of duty and more than 900 continued to serve even though they were told on December 20, 1944, that they would be sent home; and

WHEREAS, Women were first allowed to join the fighter pilot ranks in 1993, and Capt. Amy Lynn Svoboda, a 1989 graduate of the U.S. Air Force Academy and one of 14 female fighter pilots in the Air

Force, was killed on May 27, 1997, when her A-10 Thunderbolt attack jet went down in the Barry M. Goldwater Air Force Range near Gila Bend, about 100 miles from Tucson, Arizona, while she was two hours into a training mission, becoming the first female fighter pilot in the Air Force to die in a crash, and as one of just six women A-10 pilots she was chief of A-10 training for her squadron; and

WHEREAS, On January 16, 1941, the War Department announced the formation of the 99th Pursuit Squadron, the first African-American flying unit, to be trained at Tuskegee, Alabama, and known as the “Lonely Eagles” who fought throughout the Mediterranean and European Theaters as the renamed 99th Fighter Squadron assigned to the 332nd Fighter Group, of which they served as a bomber escort group that never lost a bomber to enemy fighters, and also became known as the “Tuskegee Airmen,” the Air Force being the first service after the war to announce an end to racial segregation in its ranks on July 1, 1949; and

WHEREAS, During World War II, the first four Air Forces served to protect the western and eastern borders of the United States, the 5th Air Force became headquartered in Australia in December 1941, the 6th Air Force was formed in Panama in February 1942, the Hawaiian Air Force became the 7th Air Force in February 1942, the 8th Air Force, established in February 1942 and headquartered in England, began flying bombing raids over Europe in cooperation with the Royal Air Force Bomber Command, the 9th Air Force was established in September 1942 and moved to Egypt, and the 10th Air Force was formed in Ohio and moved in March 1942 to India where it was responsible for operating in the China-Burma-India Theater of operations; and

WHEREAS, The 11th Air Force was formed from the Alaskan Air Force to protect the United States and Canada and recover the Aleutian Islands from the Japanese, the 12th Air Force was established in August 1942 and moved to England to participate in the North African invasion, the 13th Air Force was formed in December 1942 and operated throughout the Pacific Theater of operation in the Solomon Islands, New Guinea, the Philippines, the Marianas, Midway, the Caroline Islands, Iwo Jima, Japan, and the Marshall Islands, and the 15th Air Force began combat operations on November 2, 1943, in Tunisia, North Africa, and later operated from Italy; and

WHEREAS, On December 20, 1941, the American Volunteer Group (AVG), Claire Chennault’s Flying Tigers, entered combat for the first time over Kunming, China, and later as part of the China Air Task Force (CATF), the Flying Tigers continued to fly missions over the Himalayas known as “the hump” from India to China, the CATF was redesignated as the 14th Air Force, and though greatly outnumbered, the 14th Air Force established a kill ratio of eight-to-one; and



WHEREAS, Lt. Col. James H. Doolittle (later General) of the Army Air Corps, an aviation pioneer and daredevil racer who pioneered instrument flying, won the Schneider Cup Race in 1925, and pushed for higher octane gasoline for airplanes in the 1930's, trained the volunteer crews of twin-engined B-25B Mitchell bombers to take off in only 450 feet from the deck of the aircraft carrier, the U.S.S. Hornet, to strike at the Japanese mainland in March 1942 to raise U.S. morale at a time when the Japanese were victorious and became known as "the Doolittle Raid" for which he received the Medal of Honor; and

WHEREAS, The Army Air Corps began World War II with more than 2,000 members and a few hundred airplanes, five years later the Army Air Force had almost 2.4 million members and nearly 80,000 aircraft and became, to this day, the largest air force ever assembled; and

WHEREAS, The National Security Act of 1947 on September 18, 1947, established the Department of Defense and the Air Force as a separate and independent arm of the United States Armed Forces, with W. Stuart Symington as the first Secretary of the Air Force and Gen. Carl A. Spaatz, Commanding General of the Army Air Force, as its first Chief of Staff on September 26, 1947, and upon its issuance, Executive Order No. 9877 defined the role and mission of the United States Air Force and its internal organization was established in the Air Force Organization Act of 1951, approved on September 19, 1951; and

WHEREAS, The United States Air Force, operating within the limits of conventional warfare in the Korean War of 1950–1953, repelled two invasions of South Korea and secured control of the skies so that United Nations troops could fight without fear of air attack, the Air Forces' F-86 pilots downing more than 100 MIGs in June 1953, including 16 on June 30 alone, and for the first time, with air supremacy established, the use of the helicopter permitted the frequent rescue of aviators shot down behind enemy lines, the Air Rescue Service having retrieved 170 Air Force pilots or crewmen from enemy territory, more than 10 percent of those who went down there; and

WHEREAS, On June 26, 1948, the Berlin Airlift "Operation Vittles" began with Douglas C-47 crews bringing eighty tons of supplies into the city on the first day, by December 31, 1948, the Air Force had flown the 100,000th flight of the airlift, and by the end of the combined Anglo-American airlift, the British and Americans delivered a total of 2,324,257 tons of food, fuel, and supplies to the beleaguered city of Berlin; and

WHEREAS, The Air Force through its Physiological Research Laboratory at Wright Field, Ohio, and later through the Air Force Aerospace Medical Research Laboratory, to name a few achievements, pioneered research on the effects of acceleration on



the living organism, issued the first recommendation on the use of a carbon monoxide detector for aircraft, carried out the first aircraft flight using pressure breathing equipment at an altitude of 42,000 feet, prepared the first military service manuals concerning the high altitude health hazards to aircrew, conducted the first high altitude bailout with parachute deployment above 40,000 feet, pioneered research on high-speed human ejection, including participation in the first live in-flight ejection seat test, introduced the first operational full-pressure suit, developed the first Helmet Mounted Display, and designed the first computerized graphics of anthropometric data for use in aircraft design; and

WHEREAS, During the Vietnam War from 1962 to the summer of 1973, the Air Force, though fighting resolutely and courageously, experienced a decade of frustration due to questionable political policies and decisionmaking, and played the decisive role in forcing North Vietnam to the peace table in 1973, and all told, the Air Force flew 5.25 million sorties over South Vietnam, North Vietnam, northern and southern Laos, and Cambodia, losing 2,251 aircraft, 1,737 because of hostile action and 514 for operational reasons, a ratio of roughly 0.4 losses per 1,000 sorties compared favorably with a 2.0 rate in Korea and the 9.7 figure during World War II, beginning with the deaths of Capt. Fergus C. Groves II, Capt. Robert D. Larson, and SSgt. Milo B. Coghill in 1962, 1,738 officers and enlisted men of the Air Force were killed in action in Southeast Asia and another 766 died in accidents or from illness; and

WHEREAS, Capt. Charles (Chuck) E. Yeager (later General) made the first supersonic flight in the rocket-powered Bell XS-1 (later redesignated the Bell X-1) over Muroc Dry Lake, California on October 14, 1947, Maj. William (Pete) Knight flew the experimental X-15A-2 rocket plane to Mach 6.72 or 4,520 mph on October 3, 1967, the fastest speed ever for a manned aircraft, Capt. Robert C. Helt flying a Lockheed SR-71A "Blackbird" reconnaissance aircraft at Beale AFB, California, set a world record for altitude in horizontal flight (85,068.997 feet) on July 28, 1976, on the same day, Capt. Eldon W. Joersz flying the same type of aircraft at Beale AFB, California, set a world record for speed over a straight course (2,193.16 mph), and, again, on the same day, Maj. Adolphus H. Bledsoe flying the Lockheed SR-71A "Blackbird" reconnaissance aircraft at Beale AFB, California, set a world record for speed over a closed circuit (2,092.294 mph); and

WHEREAS, On March 21, 1946, by order of Headquarters, Army Air Forces, the Continental Air Forces became the Strategic Air Command and from 1946 to 1991 the Strategic Air Command (SAC) operated the intercontinental and nuclear strike forces of the United States Air Force, assuming the crucial role of the main force deterring potential aggression against the United States and its allies by having our bombers on an airborne alert readiness status 24 hours a day; and



WHEREAS, On March 15, 1950, the Joint Chiefs of Staff gave the Air Force the exclusive responsibility for strategic guided missiles resulting in the development of the Atlas series intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) and booster for the U.S. Mercury manned flights, the Titan I and II, the Titan II becoming a launch vehicle for the Gemini Space Program, the Minuteman, our principal solid-propelled deterrent missile weapon, the Thor intermediate-range ballistic missile, and the Titan III which became the standard space launch system for our manned and unmanned booster missions, including the USAF's Manned Orbiting Laboratory (MOL), and the future development of military space shuttle plans and operations, communication satellites, early missile warning systems, and the Navstar Global Positioning System (GPS) for navigation; and

WHEREAS, The State of California played a major role in this history beginning in 1918 to the present in all phases of air power to include the acceleration of training air crew members, including pilots, navigators, bombardiers, and gunnery personnel; establishing the research, development, and testing of aircraft and ballistic missiles to assure the superiority of this nation's defensive capabilities during the critical periods of World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and the Cold War tensions; and this state has benefited tremendously due to the contributions made by the individuals who served in this state and those who make California their home as well as the financial benefits from Department of Defense spending which was a major contributor to our state's economy for at least 50 years; now, therefore, be it

*Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly thereof concurring,* That the United States Air Force is to be commended on its 50th anniversary as an independent arm of the United States Armed Forces and for its achievements in the development of our air defenses, aircraft safety, aeromedical research, strategic bombing, fighter combat, the missile and space programs, and the many peacekeeping and relief missions the Air Force has performed throughout the years; and be it further

*Resolved,* That the Secretary of the Senate transmit a copy of this resolution to the President of the United States, the Secretary of the Air Force, the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the United States Armed Forces and the California Members of the United States Senate and the House of Representatives.